

live and food and income to live on—and then that we move all these claims through as quickly as possible and do everything we can to speed the process by which they can return to normal.

There is so much grief and frustration and loss. The most positive thing that can be done is just to get everybody focused on tomorrow. If they've all got something to look forward to tomorrow, some progress, no matter how halt-

ing, it's been my experience that that's the healthiest thing that can happen, that everybody—just start people focused on coming back. And so that's what we're trying to do.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:35 a.m. while touring the area struck by a tornado on April 8. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

## Remarks in McDonald Chapel, Alabama *April 15, 1998*

Thank you very much. Thank you. Let me first of all thank Governor and Mrs. James, Senator Shelby, Congressman and Mrs. Bachus, Congressman Hilliard, and we were joined earlier today by Congressman Riley and Congressman Aderholt, my long-time friend Mayor Arrington and my friend Senator Heflin. I thank all of you for joining us, Senator Escott, Representative Hilliard, Sheriff Woodward, and all the law enforcement officials.

I want to thank James Lee Witt and our SBA director, Aida Alvarez, for their presence here today and all the FEMA workers, beginning with Mr. Witt, for the wonderful job they've done here in Alabama. I'd like to thank the people who've shared their stories with me, Pastor Homer and Shelva Jordan, as we stood in their Chapel Hill Baptist Church down there. I thank Bill and Gayle Reed, and Morris and Bonnie Rembert, and Phil and Cindy Rutland who are our hosts—we're on their property today. They are throwing an open house for us. *[Laughter]*

All of you know that we're looking at what remains of one of the deadliest tornadoes in Alabama's history, one of the most powerful tornadoes ever recorded in the United States. I've just come from a recovery center in Pratt City where I spoke with some other grieving families. I met a young man who was on his way to his wife's funeral. They were married just a year and a month.

When the Vice President came back from his tour here, he told me about the destruction, but this really is a place that has to be seen to be believed and understood. I want all of you to know, here in Alabama, that the entire

country has been moved by this disaster, by its scope, by its sweep, and by the way that you have recovered and tried to fight through it.

Our country has prayed for and hoped for you and for your neighbors in Georgia. As always, I have been especially moved by the way people in the community have pulled together, have reached out to their neighbors whom they knew and their neighbors whom they did not know before this terrible tragedy struck, and I thank you for that.

I never cease to be amazed when I see people who have lost everything, who can still express their gratitude that they and their children and their neighbors are still alive and they have the ability to start again. Your community has pulled together. Your State has been here, and there is a responsibility that your fellow citizens throughout the country feel.

The reason we have a Federal Emergency Management Agency, the reason the Small Business Administration has disaster assistance, the reason we do all these things is because all of us recognize that from time to time in America things will happen that no community, not even one State, can handle on its own.

I am pleased that Federal assistance checks are already in the hands of Alabama residents who are repairing or rebuilding their homes or those who need temporary housing or medical care. I spoke to some folks today who hadn't received them yet, and I assured them that they would be there soon, and that if they aren't they ought to call us and let us know.

I know, too, that today the first disaster loans to businesses went out from the Small Business

Administration, about \$600,000 worth of them. Also today I can say that we are making available all categories of public assistance funding for local governments and non-profit organizations to rebuild, restore, and reconstruct public facilities, including schools and infrastructure, and I think that's very important.

And I think it's also important that we recognize that for all the courage and heroism and just plain old-fashioned resilience of the people, there are emotional and physical stresses associated with a disaster like this that go beyond the cost of the buildings blowing down and the homes blown away and the family letters and pictures that will never be seen again, even beyond the hospital costs of legs that have to be set and cuts that have to be sewn up. So we're authorizing a crisis counseling assistance and training program here to provide up to 9 months of community services and outreach to help people who need to be supported as they start trying to look to tomorrow again.

Finally, I talked to a number of people today who obviously can't go to work right now because of what's happened, who are concerned about their situation. Secretary Herman and the Department of Labor are going to provide over 3 million jobs for—temporary jobs to assist in the clean up and recovery. And I hope some of the people in this neighborhood who may be unemployed as a consequence of the tornado will be able to get some temporary work helping to put their neighbors' lives and their communities back together again.

Finally, let me say that our FEMA Director, James Lee Witt, contacted the National Council of Churches about the loss and destruction to churches here, and they have pledged to help on a national basis to assist in the effort to rebuild and repair all the churches that were damaged and destroyed here in Alabama as a result of this tornado.

Let me just close with a special commendation for all the State and local emergency management officials, the search and rescue teams, the volunteers who have labored so long; the Governor told me about some of the horrible human loss just within yards of where we're standing. I thank the people in our military uniforms. Many of them have been here for hours and hours and hours without relief. I know that many of these relief workers have been working more than 18 hours a day to clear debris, to cut trees, to lift telephone poles. I would like

to compliment your power company for getting the power back on within 48 hours and allowing some measure of normalcy to return.

I would like to thank the Salvation Army for providing the free meals and all the people that contributed food from all over America. I would like to thank the people who have provided quilts or medicine or other physical support. I would also like to say—Bill and Gayle Reed said something to me I think I ought to say to all of you—they said, you know, a lot of times in the last few days the most important thing they got from their friends and neighbors was just a kind remark or a pat on the back or an expression of support. And for all of you who have done that, I thank you.

My experience has been, from being Governor of a State with a lot of tornadoes for 12 years and then being President during some of the most profound natural disasters of the 20th century, is that the most important thing for people in trouble is that they know their friends and neighbors and family members are supporting them and that they have some concrete thing to look forward to tomorrow. We have to give people a way to look forward to tomorrow—a project, work to do, something that can be done to make a difference.

I'm always struck by the strength and bravery, the generosity of the American people at a time like this. The families I have seen today have reaffirmed that and I thank them. Back behind us over here in McDonald Chapel, the Open Door Church may lie in a rubble, but I understand that on Easter morning the congregation gathered on folding chairs and held a service in the parking lot. The Book of Isaiah has a verse that has particular meaning to me. I'll just leave it with you: "You were wearied with the length of your way, but you did not say it was hopeless; you found new life for your strength, and so you were not faint."

My friends, the road to recovery is long. Your grief and your pain are profound. It will take weeks, months, even years to rebuild all that has been destroyed. But the process of restoration has begun because the most important thing you have, your spirit, was not destroyed. And we look forward to working with you all the way.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:30 a.m. in the McDonald Chapel neighborhood of suburban Birmingham, AL, which was struck by a tornado on April 8. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Fob James, Jr., and his wife, Bobbie; former Senator Howell Heflin; State Senator Sundra Escott-Russell; State Representative John R. Hilliard; Mayor

Richard Arrington, Jr., of Birmingham; Sheriff Jim Woodward of Jefferson County; Pastor Homer Jordan of Chapel Hill Baptist Church and his wife, Shelvea; and tornado survivors Bill and Gayle Reed, Morris and Bonnie Rembert, Phillip and Cindy Rutland, whose mobile home was destroyed, and Marcus Coleman, widower of Colet Coleman.

## Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting a Report on Prevention of Nuclear Proliferation

April 15, 1998

*Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)*

As required under section 601(a) of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Act of 1978 (Public Law 95-242, 22 U.S.C. 3281(a)), I am transmitting a report on the activities of United States Government departments and agencies relating to the prevention of nuclear proliferation. It covers activities between January 1, 1997, and December 31, 1997.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Newt Gingrich, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Albert Gore, Jr., President of the Senate. This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on April 16.

## Remarks Prior to Discussions With President Eduardo Frei of Chile in Santiago

April 16, 1998

*President Frei.* We're going to start this meeting, and I would like, first of all, to extend a very warm welcome to the President of the United States, to the Ministers and members of staff, and to the Ministers of my Cabinet and the advisers for Chile.

It is an honor, a pleasure, a source of pride to have you all here. We had a very pleasant visit to the United States last year, and we had the opportunity to get together in Washington to see the Congress, to visit some States, and at that point, I think we kicked off the beginning of our bilateral relationships. I would like to, therefore, extend a very cordial welcome to the entire delegation and to tell you that we are really proud to host the second Summit of the Americas.

We've been working very hard. We've done a lot of solid groundwork with the cooperation of the United States. And I think that this summit will be exceedingly interesting because we

will not only be talking about the problems of democracy and trade but we'll be talking about topics that interest the person on the street, like education, justice, health, and concerns of poor people.

I would like to point out that we had a very lengthy meeting with the U.S. President. We talked with great frankness about bilateral topics. We went over almost every single issue in our bilateral relationship with a lot of sincerity and with a positive spirit. We have noticed that our relationships are going through a very special moment; there is a lot of richness in the agenda; it's very versatile with a lot of topics. And the Ministers that are present here will be—have signed about 10 different documents on the environment, cooperation, et cetera. And I believe that we are looking toward the future with an aim to building more open societies, more democratic societies, and to put an end to the marginalization of our peoples, and would like